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DIATOM COLLECTIONS IN U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM

Dr. Albert Mann has recently been appointed curator of diatom collections in the National Museum. It is the purpose to make those now assembled, and others that may be placed here, available to students of diatoms. We are coming to realize that diatoms are not merely interesting objects of study, but are also a fundamental source of food to animal life.

NOTES ON HISTOLOGY AND TECHNIC

Trichocysts of paramecia: To cause extrusion and staining of trichocysts add a drop of ordinary fountain pen ink (blue) to the drop of water on the slide containing paramecia. This may be done before or after covering with cover-slip. One can readily watch the extrusion of the trichocysts which are stained a dense blue. By this method trichocysts are extruded as long bodies.

To stain mesogloea of hydra use a 0.2% aqueous solution of benzo-purpurin after a hæmatoxylin stain. Mesogloea is well differentiated from ectoderm and mesoderm.

To prepare earthworms for sectioning: Guyer in his text, Animal Micrology p. 223, advises cleaning out the alimentary tract by allowing the earthworms to eat moist filter-paper. This procedure is not satisfactory because the cellulose fibers in the paper tear the tissues in cutting. E. W. Sink of the Zool. Laboratory Uni. of Michigan, feeds moist bread for several days, taking precautions to keep the dish and the food clean. Then he narcotizes with chloretone and kills in any desired agent. Gilson's mercurio-nitric fluid has given good results. With this method tearing of tissues in cutting is avoided.

To kill snails and slugs fully expanded and in proper histological condition Harold Cummins gradually stupefies them with hydrochlorate of cocaine. The drug is added a few crystals at a time to the water containing the molluscs. Thirty to sixty minutes are required for complete narcotization. Results are better and quicker than the old method of drowning. Kill and fix with any approved agent.